

Connecticut State Grange

**TESTIMONY OF
THE CONNECTICUT STATE GRANGE
IN SUPPORT OF
RAISED BILL 5869, AN ACT CONCERNING AGRICULTURE SCIENCE AND
TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION**

MARCH 10, 2008

Written testimony only.

I am Gordon Gibson of Vernon, Legislative Director for the Connecticut State Grange. I am submitting testimony on behalf of the 4,000 Grange members throughout Connecticut in support of Raised Bill 5869, An Act Concerning Agriculture Science and Technology Education.

We often speak today of "magnet schools" and similar programs to improve the quality of education. Our agriculture education program, formerly known as vocational agriculture and soon to be known as "agriculture science and technology education" is an outstanding example of the success of programs designed around a specific study area. Our twenty regional agriculture education centers throughout Connecticut are all operating at or near capacity with students from rural, suburban and urban communities attending.

As with many programs, cost is always a major factor. The so called "sending" towns which must transport their students to another town for agriculture education, must reimburse the "host" town for the cost of educating their students and must also provide transportation for their students to the high school in the "host" town. These costs are often more than the per pupil cost of students who attend the local high school. Consequently, a number of the "sending" towns are not enthusiastic about agriculture education simply because of the higher per student cost. The increased funding provided in Raised Bill 5869 would offset some of these costs, thus reducing the financial burden on all the towns but especially on the many "sending" towns throughout the state. The Connecticut State Grange therefore supports Raised Bill 5869 to provide increased funding for agriculture science and technology education, a successful program by any measure we choose to use.

Thank you for your consideration of my testimony.

Gordon F. Gibson
Legislative Director
Connecticut State Grange
836 Hartford Turnpike
Vernon CT 06066
860-871-7757
Gfgibson@aol.com